

The Thirties

were told, conducting furtive money-changing transactions at unofficial rates, sending postcards to awed relatives, buying with valuta perhaps a Russian embroidered blouse or shirt for fancy-dress wear. In the U.S.S.R., they created some wonder, much indignation, too; at home, they lectured, wrote, broadcast, cultivated beards which in some cases were trimmed like Lenin's. The Government, despite certain misgivings, resumed full diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. and proceeded to negotiate an Anglo-Soviet trade agreement. In 1924 the naive proposal had been put forward and seriously considered of sending to Moscow, not a professional diplomat, but someone like Sir James O'Grady, the transport workers' leader. This proposal, however, was icily received in Moscow. "Send us a gentleman/ a Foreign Office official said to an English journalist there, 'he'll understand us/ In due course they were sent Sir Esmond Ovey, and Sir James O'Grady went to Tasmania.

To the annoyance of the Government's pacifist supporters, Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, announced the laying down of four new cruisers; work was suspended for the second time on the Singapore Naval Base, and the Rhineland was evacuated. In Germany a pocket battleship, the *Deutschland*, was launched; in Roumania Prince Carol recovered his throne, and his chief opponent, the head of the powerful Bratianu family, died of apoplexy brought on by rage at Carol's triumph; in Spain a Republic was declared amidst universal rejoicing, the most happy and bloodless revolution, it was said,

which had
ever taken place, and promising a happy,
bloodless future for
the Spanish people; at Geneva a two-year Tariff
Truce was
proposed but not accepted, and a variety of
projects laid before
the Preparatory Disarmament Commission; at
Sarajevo a tablet
was ceremoniously unveiled commemorating
Gabriel Princip,
murderer of the Archduke Ferdinand, and
strangely inscribed:
'On this heroic spot Gabriel Princip proclaimed
liberty on June
28, 1914.'